

DPH Confirms First Flu Cases in Children for 2017 – 2018 Season

DOVER – The Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH) is reporting the state's first laboratory-confirmed cases of influenza in children, for the 2017-2018 flu season. Both children are under the age of 4. One is a young male from Sussex County, and the other a female from New Castle County. The pediatric cases bring the total number of flu cases this season to 14 for the week ending Nov. 11, 2017. Another eight cases have been preliminarily confirmed for the week ending Nov. 18, with the potential for more to be reported. There are two main types of influenza (flu) virus – types A and B – that routinely spread in people and are responsible for seasonal flu outbreaks each year. Both pediatric cases of lab-confirmed influenza are type A.



DPH urges all Delawareans 6 months of age and older to get vaccinated soon if they have not yet done so. The flu is easy to transmit and you can get it even from seemingly healthy, but unvaccinated, children and adults. Since it takes about two weeks after vaccination for antibodies to develop in the body that protect against influenza virus infection, it is important to get the flu shot as early as possible to give your body time to build immunity. The intranasal vaccine (flu mist) is not being recommended this year based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's analysis, which showed the intramuscular vaccine was better at protecting against certain strains of influenza.

Vaccinations not only prevent people from getting the flu, but they can reduce the severity of flu illness and prevent visits to the doctor, clinic, emergency room, hospitalizations, and serious consequences (including death) from influenza. Vaccinated people have less chance of missing family, school and work events due to influenza illness.

Getting a flu vaccination is easy. They are offered through physician offices, many pharmacies and some grocery stores. DPH is also offering flu vaccines at its Public Health clinics in several State Service Centers including some with evening hours. For more information about the flu and where to get vaccinated, visit www.flu.delaware.gov, call 1-800-282-8672, or Google “CDC flu finder” and enter a ZIP code.

Last flu season, Delaware had 4,590 confirmed flu cases, 15 of which were fatal.

Delawareans can prevent the spread of the flu and other respiratory illness with good hygiene: Wash hands frequently with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizers, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, and dispose of tissues immediately. If a tissue is not available, cough or sneeze into your inner elbow. Droplets from a sneeze can travel up to six feet. Also avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.

Flu symptoms come on suddenly, and include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, headaches and body aches, chills, and fatigue. Some people get complications including pneumonia, bronchitis, and sinus and ear infections. Those sick with the flu should stay home from work, school, and other gatherings and not return until they have been free of fever – with temperature less than 100° F (37.8° C), without the use of fever-reducing medications for at least 24 hours.

They should avoid close contact with well people in the household, stay well-hydrated by drinking plenty of water and other clear liquids. Over-the-counter medicines can provide

symptom relief but if you suspect you have influenza, call your doctor as they may decide to provide antiviral medications to help hasten recovery and prevent serious complications. This is particularly important for those who feel very sick, are pregnant, or have chronic medical conditions.

A person who is deaf, hard-of-hearing, deaf-blind or speech-disabled can call the DPH phone number above by using TTY services. Dial 7-1-1 or 800-232-5460 to type your conversation to a relay operator, who reads your conversation to a hearing person at DPH. The relay operator types the hearing person's spoken words back to the TTY user. To learn more about TTY availability in Delaware, visit <http://delawarerelay.com>.

Delaware Health and Social Services is committed to improving the quality of the lives of Delaware's citizens by promoting health and well-being, fostering self-sufficiency, and protecting vulnerable populations. DPH, a division of DHSS, urges Delawareans to make healthier choices with the 5-2-1 Almost None campaign: eat 5 or more fruits and vegetables each day, have no more than 2 hours of recreational screen time each day (includes TV, computer, gaming), get 1 or more hours of physical activity each day, and drink almost no sugary beverages.